

Appl. No. 10/787,485
Amdt. dated July 13, 2005
Reply to Office action of June 17, 2005

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings includes changes to Figures 1, 2 and 3. These sheets, which includes Figures 1-3, replace the original sheets including Figures 1-3. In Figures 1-3, the legend, "Prior Art" is added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to because FIGS. 1-3 did not include the legend, "Prior Art." Replacement FIGS. 1-3 containing the legend, "Prior Art," are attached hereto. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Action alleges that the claims require a shared port, but FIG. 4 discloses two different ports 410 and 414. The Examiner's attention is directed to FIG. 4, which shows the shared port 414 in communication with the OHS 417 and the OHT 409 on rail 412. This is also described in paragraph [0020], which recites, "This larger, expanded interbay port 414 serves as the material transfer port between the rail section of the OHT 412 and another rail section 416 for the OHS system 417 and the material stockers 404 of the present disclosure." Paragraphs [0021] and [0022] also reference the shared interbay material transfer port 414.

Further, there is no requirement in claims 1 or 6 that would require the shared port to be adjacent to intrabay OHT port 410 as suggested by the Action. As made clear by FIG. 4 and the specification in paragraphs [0019] and [0020], the OHT system in the example includes both an intrabay rail section 408 and an interbay rail section 412.

Therefore, the specification and drawings make clear to one of ordinary skill in the art that port 414 is an example of a shared port for the first material transport system (e.g., interbay OHT 409 on rail 412) traveling at a first height and the second material transport subsystem (e.g., OHS 417) traveling at a second height.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 6 under § 112 is respectfully requested.

To remove any inconsistency, claims 2 and 16 are amended to recite that, "the first material transport system comprises an intrabay material transport system." That is, the first material transport system of claim 2 includes an intrabay transport system such as that on rail section 408, but may also have an interbay transport system such as that on rail 412.

Claims 1-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Peiter (EP 1202325). The independent claims have been amended. For example, claim 1 recites, "a predetermined material stocker having at least one shared material transfer port to be used by both the first and second transport subsystems."

Peiter neither discloses nor suggests this feature. Peiter teaches elimination of the stocker from his configuration. At column 1, paragraph [0004], Peither discusses problems with using a stocker. In col. 2, paragraphs [0008] and [0009], Peither teaches that the interbay rail tracks are led into and completely through the bay area to enable the vehicles of the interbay transport configuration to bring their carrier load directly in front of the processing machine that is due to perform the next process step in the wafer fabrication sequence. Peiter's configuration thus eliminates the stocker from the configuration completely. Instead, Peiter uses a crane-type hoist arm 22 to transfer materials directly from the interbay transport system to the production machine.

The Action alleges (page 3, paragraph 5) that Peiter teaches a shared material transport port 10. However, item 10 is not a shared material transport port. Item 10 is a rail track (col. 6, line 1). A rail track is not a port. Peiter neither discloses nor suggests any structure corresponding to a material transport port of a stocker that is shared between the first and second material transport systems. Peiter does not include a stocker in his system at all.

Therefore, the rejection of claim 1 under § 102 should be withdrawn. The other independent claims have been amended in a similar fashion to claim 1, and should be allowable for at least the same reasons. The dependent claims should all be allowable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims.

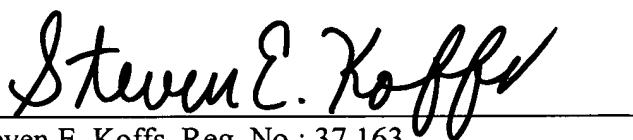
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

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The Assistant Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any excess payment that may be associated with this communication to deposit account **04-1679**.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 13, 2005



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enclosure: 3 sheets of drawings